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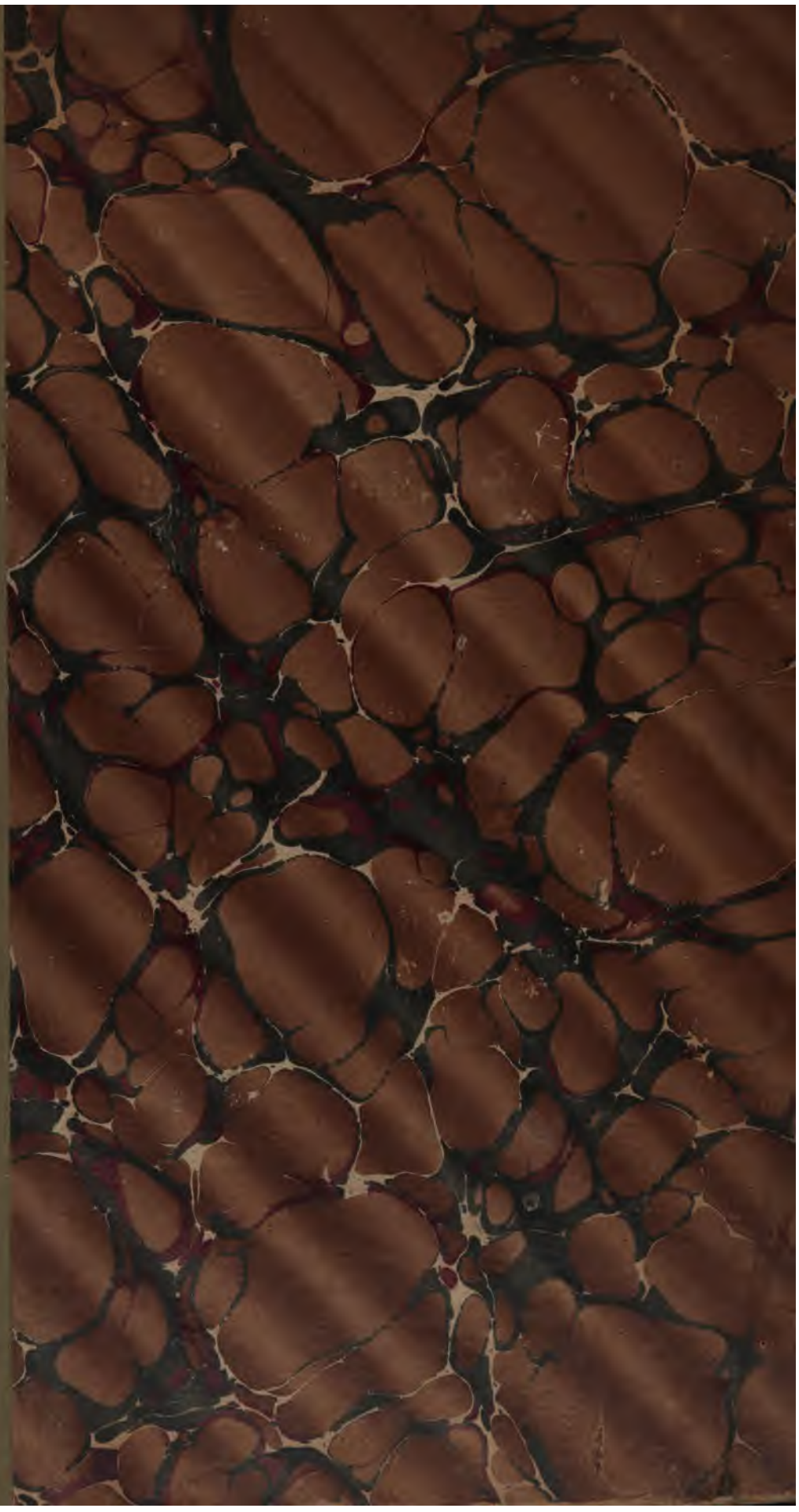
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DECORATION DAY.

ADDRESS

OF

WILLIAM E. CHANDLER,

ON

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1889,

AT

NASHUA, N. H.,

BEFORE

JOHN G. FOSTER POST NO. 7, G. A. R.

Concord, N. H.

REPUBLICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION, 22 NORTH MAIN STREET.

1889.



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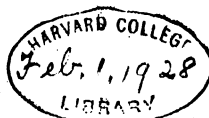
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Lawrence S. Mayo
ADDRESS.

Toward the close of this Decoration Day, after flags and flowers have been placed by loving comrades upon the graves of the soldiers of Nashua who fought for the Union of these states and have passed from earth to their great reward, and after the corner-stone of a monument in honor of these heroes has been laid, we have here again assembled to revive recollections of the momentous events of the American war of secession, to render further appropriate tribute to the memory of the soldiers of the Union, and to consider and renew the obligations which we owe to the survivors of the Army of the Republic, and to the widows and orphans who have been left to our gratitude and tender care.

Twenty-four years have passed since the assured triumph of the armies of the North defeated secession and reestablished on firm foundations our Federal Union. Those of us who remember well and vividly the events of the war from 1861 to 1865 are growing fewer, and are passing off the stage of human activities; while millions of young men and maidens, who have no personal recollections of the great conflict, are coming forward to control the destinies of America. These may naturally inquire on such an occasion as this,—What was the War of the Rebellion? How did it come to pass, and what were its causes? Why did two sections of a prosperous nation array themselves against each other in bloody strife, involving the dreadful horrors of battle, and the devastating ruin which always attends a civil war? It is fitting that on Memorial days suitable answers be made to these pertinent inquiries.

The causes of war do not always lie on the surface of affairs. It was difficult, I well remember, for Americans to form a satisfactory opinion as to the real cause of the Crimean War. An alleged reason was, that the Russian attack was justified by the intention of the Turkish government to give to the Latin Christians privileges like those allowed the Greek Christians at certain holy shrines in Palestine. France, willing to create a pretext for war, had tried to obtain from the Porte grants for her subjects equal or superior to those enjoyed by the Greek Church supported by Russia. Kinglake says,—“The question was, whether, for the purpose of passing

through the building into their grotto, the Latin monks should have the key of the chief door of the church of Bethlehem, and also one of the keys to each of the two doors of the sacred manger, and whether they should be at liberty to place on the sanctuary of the nativity a silver star adorned with the arms of France.” “Their claim [that of France] to have a key of the great door of the church of Bethlehem, instead of being put off with the key of the lesser door, long remained insoluble, and had to be decided by the advance of armies and the threatening movement of fleets.” Of course the Crimean War did not arise from this flimsy pretext, but from the determination of Russia to encroach upon Turkey, and the decision of England and France to protect Turkey and keep Russia from controlling the Hellespont.

Take another instance. When France challenged Prussia to a combat fatal to the assailing party, no clear cause appeared; and when the candidacy of the German Prince Leopold to the throne of Spain, which had been soon abandoned, and the dubious insult from the Prussian king to the French ambassador Benedetti, were heralded forth as a sufficient reason for a declaration of war, the public mind was not deceived by such a pretence. Louis Napoleon was determined to fight Prussia, hoping thus to save his dynasty and aggrandize France, while Prussia was ready if not eager for the fray, intending to humble her ancient adversary, and to establish and dominate the German empire.

Citizens of our continent have been slow to comprehend the real necessity for those many European wars which have been entered upon for no more substantial reason than to preserve the so called balance of power among jealous nations occupying a comparatively small portion of the earth's surface. Much research will be required of every student of history who seeks to discover the real causes of the wars among the civilized nations of Europe.

But the cause of our great civil conflict it is not difficult to find. No reasons, whether real or fictitious, such as have been assigned for other famous wars, can be looked to as accounting for our terrible struggle. No encroachment, in the European sense, upon any balance of power among the states of

our Union brought on the contest. The wonderful Constitution framed by our wise ancestors provided no defective organization which could not be perfected except as the result of civil war. Our free citizens were sufficiently homogeneous in lineage, tastes, occupations, and habits to prevent any serious contention growing out of dissimilarity in these respects. The real cause of the American Rebellion of 1861 is now seen and acknowledged by all men. A quarter of a century's study, reflection, and discussion leave no doubt that the sole and sufficient reason was the existence within the United States of the system of human slavery.

In recurring at this date to the subject of slavery, it must be borne in mind that the rapid movement of human life under modern conditions has already almost obliterated the recollection of slavery as an American institution. By those who have actually seen it it is almost forgotten, and to the most of this gathering it is only a story, a tradition, almost as far away as the tortures of the early Christians or the barbarities of the Inquisition. And yet it is sadly true, that not long ago, in so called free America, men, women, and children were owned as slaves, bought and sold, overworked, whipped, and tortured. Families were separated forever to satisfy the greed of the slave-owner, and the best sentiments of which the human heart is capable were crushed out and destroyed by a crime which made merchandise of immortal souls, and turned the sacred names of father and mother, son and daughter, brother and sister, into the merest mockery of human affection.

In New Orleans, in 1855, I saw a family almost white—a father, mother, and four children, as beautiful a group as I ever beheld—sold to the highest bidder for \$2,900. I also saw a woman sold upon the auction block and commended by the coarse auctioneer, amid the laughter of a brutal crowd, as being more valuable because she was a member of the church of Christ. The impression received by me from that sight became ineradicable.

Such an incident as this, where the auctioneer recommended a woman on the block as "a good Christian," brought from the then despairing Whittier, our poet evangelist of freedom, his outburst entitled "The Christian Slave."

"A Christian—going—gone!
Who bids for God's own image; for His grace
Which that poor victim of the market-place
Hath in her suffering won?"

"My God! can such things be!
Hast Thou not said that whatsoever is done
Unto Thy weakest and Thy humblest one
Is even done to Thee?"

* * * * *
"But our poor slave in vain
Turns to the Christian shrine his aching eyes:
Its rites will only swell his market price,
And rivet on his chain."

"God of all right! how long
Shall priestly robbers at Thine altar stand,
Lifting in prayer to Thee the bloody hand
And haughty brow of wrong?"

"O from the fields of cane;
From the low rice swamp; from the trader's
cell;
From the black slave-ship's foul and loathesome
hell,
And coffee's weary chain,—

"Hoarse, horrible, and strong,
Rises to heaven that agonizing cry,
Filling the arches of the hollow sky;
How long, O God, how long."

Abraham Lincoln witnessed a similar slave auction in New Orleans. Turning to a friend, he spoke in accents of horror and hatred against the atrocity of American chattel slavery. He said,—"If ever I get a chance to strike that accursed institution, I mean to hit it hard," using an imprecation which was never registered to his condemnation in the book of the Recording Angel. To Mr. Lincoln was at last given the immortal honor of striking the blow which destroyed slavery; and long after the name and deeds of many a military hero have been forgotten, will be preserved the fame of Abraham Lincoln, the author of the Emancipation Proclamation, the liberator from slavery of a whole race of human beings.

In Lincoln Park, in Washington, is a most appropriate statue of the President. It is inscribed,—"Freedom's memorial. In grateful memory of Abraham Lincoln this monument was erected by the Western Sanitary Commission of St. Louis, Missouri, with funds contributed solely by emancipated citizens of the United States declared free by his proclamation January 1st, 1863." Lincoln stands, with his stalwart form, holding the proclamation in his hand; while at his feet kneels a colored man from whose limbs the shackles have been broken, who is blessing the giver of his freedom. While this day remembering the deeds of bravery on the battle-field of the soldiers of the Union, let the first tribute of our thoughts and thanks be given to this marvellously wise, patient, gentle, genial, persistent, strong and fearless leader of the Northern people, the greatest and best representative American since Washington.

It would not be wise, within the limits of

this discourse, to attempt to give a history of American slavery. From its feeble inception, and its recognition in the Constitution of 1788, the authors of which instrument did not venture there to call it by its dishonoring name, down to its final destruction, in 1866, by the 13th amendment of that Constitution, an outline of events will suffice for present purposes.

At first slavery assumed somewhat the character of a paternal institution. Its evils were a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. It seemed unnatural to America, and our forefathers believed that it would gradually disappear at no distant day. But at last it became the great, overwhelming national evil, the sum of all villainies, dominating all other interests, by reason of the acquisition of the slave regions of Louisiana, and the invention by Eli Whitney of the cotton gin, which caused an increased adaptation of slave labor to the production of the great American staple. Cotton becoming the chief American product for exportation, the South grew rich and prosperous through its culture. Cotton became king. The cotton lords became the wealthiest class in the country.

But wealth was not the only advantage which slavery came to give to the South. It was also soon discovered by the slave-owners that slavery, thus made so profitable, would give them overwhelming political power in the government, such as the framers of the Constitution had not imagined when they provided that in fixing the basis of representation in the Presidential Electoral College and for representatives in the popular branch of the National congress, there should be added to the total white population three fifths of all other persons, meaning the slave population. As the inevitable result the South took control of the government. A slave aristocracy grew up which dominated the nation with inexorable power. It controlled every congress, it selected all Presidents, it took possession of the supreme court; and when the Northern conscience concerning slavery—found to be thus protected and favored by the Constitution—began to show itself, the slave-owners resisted all attempts to restrict or limit the institution, or to place it where the founders of the Constitution believed it should be placed—in a condition of progress towards final extinction.

The declared policy of the slaveholding interests soon came to be this,—that the slave states should exceed, or at all events equal, the free states, so that there should never be a majority from the free states in the United States senate; and that when-

ever in the growth of the nation new states should be added to the Union, if the slave states could not be kept in the majority, there should, at least, be admitted a slave state for every free state, so that there should be no opportunity afforded by legislation for weakening slavery in its entrenched position in the National government.

The thirteen original states had arranged themselves seven free, six slave. Louisiana, with slavery, became a state in 1812; and the free and slave states were thus made equal. Thenceforth the slave power took care that new states should come in only in pairs:—Kentucky and Vermont; Tennessee and Ohio; Indiana and Mississippi; Illinois and Alabama; Maine and Missouri (the free states here gaining the Missouri Compromise, dedicating to freedom in the future all the Louisiana purchase, except Missouri, north of 36 degrees 30 minutes north latitude); Arkansas and Michigan; Florida and Iowa. When Mr. Polk became President, fifteen states had been admitted—eight slave and seven free; and the states were twenty-eight in number—free fourteen, slave fourteen. Next the Mexican War, unjustifiably waged to enlarge the area of slavery, gave to the Union the slave state of Texas; but the free state of Wisconsin was close at the door and kept the balance even.

But in proportion as slavery, through the facilities which it afforded for acquiring wealth, and through the political power which it gave to ambitious men, strengthened its hold upon the South and the nation; so hatred of slavery, based upon its inhuman and unchristian character, grew stronger at the North. Widespread agitation began; the privilege of free speech was fully exercised; and that great anti-slavery conflict ensued, the accounts of which must form the greater part of our history during our first hundred years; and this conflict, from the very constitution of human nature, could end only in the destruction of slavery or in its complete and overwhelming ascendancy in the nation.

Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Seward are both recorded as having said that it was impossible that this country could long exist half slave and half free. At Springfield, Illinois, June 17, 1858, Mr. Lincoln said,—“A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot permanently endure half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall; but I do expect that it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all another. Either the opponents of slavery

will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction, or its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South."

At Rochester, New York, October 25, 1858, Mr. Seward said,—“It is an irrepressible conflict between opposing and enduring forces, and it means that the United States must and will, sooner or later, become either entirely a slaveholding nation, or entirely a free labor nation. Either the cotton and rice fields of South Carolina and the sugar plantations of Louisiana will ultimately be tilled by free labor, and Charleston and New Orleans become marts for legitimate merchandise only, or else the rye fields and wheat fields of Massachusetts and New York must again be surrendered by their farmers to slave culture and to the production of slaves, and Boston and New York become once more markets for trade in the bodies and souls of men.”

In 1850 the contest over slavery assumed such proportions and such bitterness that good men of all parties found their fears lest there should be a dissolution of the Union reaching a culminating point. As a result of this crisis of fear the compromise measures of that year were adopted, and during the presidential canvass of 1852 both political parties of the country acquiesced in them, and declared them to be final and perpetual. But the result of the election of 1852, when a pro-slavery president was chosen from New Hampshire, indicated to the slave interests that the Northern people, in their fears that the slavery conflict would bring a dissolution of the Union, would submit to almost any measure for the protection of slavery which might be demanded by its advocates. The compromises of 1850 had also proved unsatisfactory to the South. Although it had obtained the passage of a fugitive slave law, it had been compelled to consent to the admission of the free state of California, which had suddenly through the discovery of gold sprung into being as a great and prosperous commonwealth, and this admission, without that of any counterbalancing slave state, had at last broken the Southern scheme and made the Union of states one containing sixteen free states to fifteen slave states.

From these two conditions—the belief that the North would submit to every demand of slavery, and the dissatisfaction of the South because it had lost the balance of power—came the repeal of the Missouri

Compromise, which repeal, it was absurdly contended, was a legitimate outcome of the compromises of 1850, whereas it was in fact an absolute violation and destruction of those measures, and opened up to slavery a vast and fertile territory which under the Missouri Compromise had been forever consecrated to liberty and to free institutions.

In aid of the new Southern demand came the Dred Scott Decision, in which the Supreme Court asserted a principle never before seriously contended for by the South, that slavery instead of being an exceptional and local institution was entitled to be universal and national, and that the slave-owner had a right to take and hold his slaves in all the territories of the Union. With this reopening of the anti-slavery struggle, came the memorable conflict on the plains of Kansas to decide whether that territory should become another free state, to give to freedom two majority of the states, or whether it should be wrested from freedom and admitted as a slave state under the Lecompton constitution, to make the slave states again equal in number to the free states.

In this momentous contest the North and freedom triumphed. The dark tide of slavery which had swept from Missouri over the Kansas border, was driven back; free state settlers from New England controlled Kansas, and thwarted all attempts of the slave power to organize its government. The issue, which had become the absorbing national question, was taken into the presidential election of 1860. The Republican party, which had been formed to resist slavery extension, nominated Mr. Lincoln. The Democratic party broke into two fragments, and Mr. Lincoln was elected President. This election of Mr. Lincoln certainly gave no just cause for war, but the South saw in the result the defeat of their plans for slavery extension, and the destruction of their method of protection for slavery. They determined to resist the new administration facing toward freedom: they organized a Southern Confederacy based on slavery; and thus came our great conflict, a battle on the one side for the dissolution of the Union in order to secure the extension into free territory of the crime of human slavery, and on the other side a contest for the restriction of slavery within its existing limits, the consecration to freedom of all the great unorganized territories of the United States, and the ascendancy of freedom in America through the maintenance unbroken of the Constitution and the Union. Thus it clearly ap-

pears that the war was on account of slavery, and did not arise from any other cause.

Within the brief period that is allotted to me amid the impressive ceremonials of this anniversary, I cannot undertake to recite any of the great events of the War of the Rebellion. From Bull Run to Appomattox the soldiers of the Union showed endurance, courage and patriotism without stint. The Southern boast, that Northern soldiers would be no match for Southern soldiers, proved a delusion. The war was unnecessarily prolonged through various causes, which at the time made Northern people impatient; but now looking back to the war it seems short, for in four years the South was beaten down and subdued, and the Union saved and restored.

New Hampshire did her share in this great work of saving the country. Thirty one thousand volunteer soldiers from a population of 330,000, more than filled the state's quota for the national defence. On almost every battlefield her sons fought and died in their country's service. New Hampshire's roll of honor will compare favorably with that of any other Northern state. Your own city of Nashua may proudly join in the perpetual songs of triumph, for her sons went forth in full numbers, from patriotic motives, to do perilous service in their country's cause, and to bring credit and honor to the city which was their beloved home. The monument this day begun, the eloquent address this day delivered as its corner-stone was lowered in place, and other addresses to be made when its summit is lifted toward heaven, will perpetuate the remembrances which are cherished of all the brave soldiers of this favored city.

It is impossible not to contemplate with sadness the distresses which the war for the Union brought to the North. Its cost from the national treasury was \$6,000,000,000. Three hundred thousand soldiers were lost during the conflict, and the survivors brought to their homes impaired powers and diseased frames which have shortened many lives. The South met with an equal loss of life, while property values were utterly destroyed through that whole region. But these great expenditures and losses were compensated for not merely by a Union saved and made perpetual, but by the destruction forever of the great cause of the conflict. When slavery came to be clearly seen as the cause of the Rebellion, it was decided by the nation that slavery which had appealed to the sword for the destruction of the republic must perish by

the sword in the salvation of the republic, and so the policy of emancipation was decreed by Abraham Lincoln, and sustained by the Northern people. When the great contest ended, America stood a free republic, with no vestige of slavery remaining to pollute her soil, degrade her national conscience, or stain her national honor.

The time had indeed come for which the then hopeful Whittier had prayed when he sang,—

So shall the Northern pioneer go joyful on his way,
To wed Penobscot's waters to San Francisco's bay;
To make the rugged places smooth, and sow the
vales with grain,
And bear with liberty and law the Bible in his
train;
The mighty West shall bless the East, and sea shall
answer sea,
And mountain unto mountain call, Praise God, for
we are free!

Regarded at the end of a quarter of a century, when the personal griefs arising from the bereavements occasioned by our civil war have been softened by time, the general judgment of the nation is that the war brought an inestimable blessing in that it destroyed slavery, and cemented in the strongest possible bonds the Union of the states. It is evident that the country is not only stronger, but more prosperous than it could have been if slavery had remained, blighting nearly one half the land, and impeding in many ways the national growth. As a republic absolutely free, we have since 1865 accomplished a growth of which no conception was entertained in 1861. The grandeur of the nation to-day is the appropriate subject of proud contemplation. The recent centennial celebration in New York city, the most wonderful gathering of the sons of America which the country has ever seen, made the heart of every person who witnessed it swell with pride, and has caused to throb with patriotic ardor the pulses of sixty millions of the people of this foremost republic of the world. The prosperity and glory to which we have attained as a nation could never have come under the old system through which slavery dominated the country, and while the continuation of our existence was a compromise with a great national crime and the smothering of the national conscience. Therefore we may now confidently say the war was worth all its cost, and is to-day to be considered as a great cause of our unexampled prosperity, and of the matchless national blessings which we enjoy as a people.

Thus impressed by the cause, the events, and the great results of the war, we come this day to meditate concerning the heroic

dead soldiers of the Union. We feel that they did not die in vain. How could they, in pursuing the common lot of all men, die better than as saviors of their country? At all times and in all nations it has been considered sweet and becoming to die for one's country. For their country's safety, men have ever been found willing to peril their lives and to go out to premature death. They have felt that they would fittingly and willingly, if such were to be the fortune of the battle, thus give up their earthly existence; and their kindred and friends, while mourning for their loss, have had their sorrow alleviated by the thought that if death were to come to those whom they loved, they would not have had it come in any other way or under any other circumstances; and they have found consolation in the most precious thought, that those whom they mourned gave up their lives for their country's sake.

It is universally believed that those who have died for their country have taken a high place among the immortals. This address would be incomplete without some allusion to the future state, and yet it should be mentioned with reverence and reserve. I cannot refrain from saying that there is for me no explanation of the deep mystery of life and death except through the belief that the present life is but the threshold of an eternal existence. In no other way can I reconcile with the wisdom and goodness of God the terrible events that are constantly occurring in the onward march of mankind. But if this life is but a fragment of the whole, and the years and events of the longest existence here are insignificant compared with the years and events of the future state, then I think I can feebly understand how, consistently with God's mercy, the ship laden with hundreds of human beings may be allowed to go down into the depths of the ocean burying them all at once in a watery grave; why sudden fire and accident in a moment may destroy their thousands, men and women, young and old, bad and good, in one common annihilation, and why the nameless horrors of the battlefield may be permitted to happen. Such appalling events may be designed by the Creator to serve some wise purpose, of which we now seek in vain the meaning, but which will be made clear to us hereafter. We say with the seer of Patmos, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." We, therefore, also believe and say that the inevitable rest in the grave is

to be followed by the activities of an eternal life, where there shall be forgiveness for sins, emancipation from evil, and a pure and glorious existence for all the creatures whom God hath made. In this view of the universe the defenders of the Republic who died upon the battlefield had great advantage, for they ennobled themselves by the manner of their death, and now stand higher in the angelic throng than do those to whom it was not given to be so fortunate in the mode of their transition.

Among the noblest of the sons of New Hampshire who left the congenial occupations of peace and the unalloyed joys of domestic life to do battle for freedom and the Union, Aaron F. Stevens, in person and character, stood conspicuous. He was major of the 1st New Hampshire Volunteers, colonel of the 13th Regiment, and became a brevet brigadier general. Severely wounded in the assault on Fort Harrison, Sept. 29, 1864, while at the head of his brigade, he was carried off the field by his victorious soldiers. His military career is one of the most creditable and honorable in the history of the New Hampshire troops.

After he returned to the duties of peace, he served his state faithfully as a member of congress, and achieved distinction in the practice of his profession of the law. As a citizen and soldier, his career may well be a model for the guidance of the ingenuous youth of the town of Derry, where he was born; of Peterborough, where he was nourished and educated; of Nashua, where he passed the years of his manhood; and of the state which he dearly loved and which he highly honored by his whole life of purity, integrity, and nobleness in every thought, word, and deed.

Gen. Stevens's character was indeed high and symmetrical. It was not one-sided or incomplete. In meeting the emergencies of civil life and the crises of the battlefield he showed breadth of vision, coolness of judgment, wisdom in decision, and quickness and courage in execution. In his professional and political as well as in his military service, he took rank among the great and strong men of his time. Hampered by ill-health, and by disability incurred in the war, continually increasing upon him,—but aided by as patient, faithful, and noble a wife as the world has ever seen,—his iron will caused him to continue his professional work long after he should have been enabled to lay it aside. He lived a full and true life, and died in the faith and hope of a Christian.

My affection for him was greater than

even our mutual friends understood. I delighted in the humor and geniality of his conversation; I respected the intensity of his convictions; I rejoiced in his absolute freedom from petty meannesses. I loved him for the real sweetness of his disposition—which all his intimate friends knew to be a pervading quality of this distinguished son of Nashua, whom I am sure all her citizens who now hear me will be glad on this Memorial Day to remember and honor, with unbounded respect and unqualified affection. His body we laid in your beautiful cemetery, but his pure soul lives and rejoices in the presence of the Lord of the Universe.

Turning from the memories of our dead soldiers, our thoughts, before we separate, should be directed towards our duty to the living. All the survivors of the Union Army, even those who entered into service as the merest youths, are now becoming gray and feeble with age. They should be treated by the nation with the kindest care: even the humblest one of them should be looked upon with respect and reverence. He was associated with the greatest conflict of modern times. He did his part, whatever it was, towards saving his country. Beyond the tributes of reverence and affection which the country can bestow upon its veterans, it can give them employment and pensions. The laws have provided that they shall have the preference, all other things being equal, in the appointments to office. These laws should be obeyed in their true spirit. Pensions should be freely allowed. The country now has an overflowing treasury, and aid to the soldier should be awarded and voted in a liberal spirit. If, in the progress of time, the prosperity of the country diminishes and the treasury becomes empty, the veteran soldier or his widow or his children will be willing to bear a share in the general depression. But such a day is far off, and now from full and ample means is our recognition to be extended to the men who saved the republic, and to their widows and orphans. Pensions are now given only to those who are more or less disabled, and it is not considered that the time has yet arrived for the allowance of a service pension to every soldier without requiring proof of disability. Whenever that time does arrive, there is no doubt that the national legislature will respond promptly to the appropriate demand which may be made upon it. It may, I think, be safely promised that whatever the soldiers, duly associated together, after careful deliberation as a body, may decide to ask for, the

country will gladly grant. No soldier of the Union, no widow or child who is entitled to the nation's care, should ever suffer for want of the necessaries of life; and no one of them should ever be compelled to receive sustenance as paupers, or in any of the poor-houses of the nation. Let them not only be adequately cared for, but let them be nourished, each and all, in suitable homes and by the domestic fireside.

In concluding my imperfect presentation of thoughts which seem appropriate to this sacred day, I wish to impress upon those who have honored me with their attention (and as well upon myself), what I consider to be the supreme lesson which is to be drawn from the contemplation of the War of the Rebellion and its incidents. That lesson is the duty of *patriotism*,—the obligation to preserve for ourselves and for those who are to come after us that republican government which was founded by the War of the Revolution, and has been saved, strengthened, and transmitted to us through the War of the Rebellion. Ours is the greatest if not the only real republic in the world; and in the ages to come it must be protected against all enemies, and at every cost. At this auspicious opening of the second century of our national existence, our hearts swelling with pride at the thought that we are citizens of so great and wonderful a country, let us esteem patriotism as the highest duty, as also a priceless privilege; let us rejoice to proclaim everywhere and at all times that our greatest national blessing is our republican form of government, which allows the largest individual liberty consistent with stability of government, under a Constitution framed with high wisdom, vindicated by long years of national security and prosperity, and strengthened by costly sacrifices made by our honored and beloved dead.

Let us teach our children fully to understand the value of our Constitution and Union, and to comprehend the extreme suffering by which they have been created and established. Having done this, we may confidently hope that when we die we may pass away in the full faith that should the clouds of civil contention ever again gather over the country and civil war once more menace America, there will spring to the defence of the Union, hearts as brave and arms as strong as were those of the soldiers of 1861, whose deeds of valor saved the nation, and to whom, living and dead, millions of American citizens have this day assembled, in gatherings like this of ours, to utter the homage of a grateful country.

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